

ADULT HEALTH STATUS IN TENNESSEE BEHAVIORAL RISK FACTOR SURVEILLANCE SYSTEM (BRFSS), 1998⁶

The BRFSS is a nationwide telephone survey of adults age 18 or older that is conducted annually by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. For the 1998 Tennessee sample, collected by the Tennessee Department of Health, 2,944 individuals were interviewed. Study sample percentages by category were as follows: 65% females, 35% males, 84% whites, and 16% non-whites. The data reported are based on weighted percentages.

Health Access

In 1998, 13% of adult Tennesseans reported that they had no health insurance coverage. Males were significantly⁷ more likely than females to be without health insurance (15% vs. 12%). Nonwhites were significantly more likely to be uninsured than whites (18% vs. 12%)⁷.

Over one-third of unemployed persons (36%) were uninsured. As income decreased, the lack of health insurance coverage dramatically increased. While only 4% of those in the highest income bracket (\geq \$75,000 per year) reported that they had no health insurance, 23% of those in the lowest income bracket (\leq \$15,000) reported lack of coverage.

By age-group, those 65 years and over were least likely to be without health insurance (5%), while 18-24 year olds were most likely to be without health insurance (22%).

General Health Status

Overall, 18% of Tennessee adults ages 18 years and over described their general health status as fair or poor in 1998. This level was similar to that from the previous year's BRFSS.

While females were slightly more likely than males to perceive their health as fair or poor (19% vs. 17%, respectively), the difference was not statistically significant.

Likewise for nonwhites and whites, there was very little difference in perceived fair or poor health status (19% vs 18%, respectively), which was not statistically significant.

⁶At the time of report preparation, 1999 data was not yet available.

⁷A *p*-value of 0.05 was used to assess statistical significance.

Morbidity

Diabetes

Approximately 6% of adult Tennesseans reported having ever been told by a health professional that they have diabetes. This is up from 4% in 1997. Of the race-gender groups, nonwhite females had the highest reported prevalence of diabetes, at 8%.

The prevalence of diabetes reported appeared to be inversely associated with income and education; the lower the income and the less well-educated, the more likely an individual was to report having been diagnosed with diabetes. The levels ranged from 11% among those with household incomes below \$15,000 to 2% among those in households with incomes at or above \$75,000. Less than 4% of college graduates reported diabetes, compared to about 10% of those having less than a high school education.

Hypertension

Nearly all adult Tennesseans (97%) reported that they had their blood pressure checked by a health professional within the past 2 years. Twenty-nine percent of adult Tennesseans reported having been told their blood pressure was high.

Significantly more females reported hypertension than males (33% vs. 24%). Nonwhite females were the race-gender group with the highest reported prevalence of hypertension (36%), while nonwhite males were the race-gender group with the lowest reported prevalence of hypertension (24%). Twenty-four percent of white males also reported ever having been told that their blood pressure was high.

Utilization of Preventive Services

Flu Immunization

Seventy percent of Tennessee adults ages 65 or older reported that they had received a flu shot within the past 12 months. Although the difference was not statistically significant, 71% of white seniors had been immunized against the flu, while only 59% of nonwhite seniors had been immunized. Males (71%) and females (69%) aged 65+ were similarly likely to have received the flu shot.

Pneumonia Vaccination

Nearly half (49%) of Tennesseans aged 65+ reported they had never received a pneumonia vaccination. Nonwhite seniors were more likely than white seniors to report never receiving the vaccination (68% vs. 47%), with 75% of nonwhite females aged 65+ reporting never having received the pneumonia vaccine.

Cholesterol Screening

Approximately three-quarters of Tennessee adults reported that they had had their cholesterol checked in the past 5 years. There was a significant difference between males and females and between white and nonwhite females. Seventy-two percent of males had their cholesterol checked in the past 5 years, compared to 77% of females. White females were the race-gender group that most commonly reported having their cholesterol checked in the past 5 years, while nonwhite females were the least common race-gender group to report cholesterol screening (79% vs. 70%, respectively).

Mammograms and Clinical Breast Examinations

Twenty percent of females aged 40 and over reported never having had a mammogram and clinical breast examination (CBE). While the risk of breast cancer increases with age, in 1998, females in the oldest age-group were the most likely to report that they never had a mammogram and CBE (25%).

Females at the lowest income levels were considerably more likely to report that they never had a mammogram and CBE (29%) than were females at the highest income levels (8%). Education level also appeared to play a role in whether or not a woman reported having a mammogram and CBE. Thirty-one percent of females over 40 years of age with less than a high school education never had a mammogram and CBE; of those with a college degree or more, only 10% never had a mammogram and CBE.

While annual breast cancer screening for females aged 50 years and over is widely recommended, 29% of females in this age-group had not had a mammogram and CBE in the past 2 years in Tennessee as of 1998.

PAP Smears

Although having a yearly Papanicolaou (Pap) test is recommended for all females over 18 years old, 14% of females in this age-group reported that they had not had a Pap test in the past 3 years, and 7% reported that they had *never* had a Pap test.

Broken down further by age-group, a relatively high percentage (20%) of females ages 18 to 24 had never had a Pap test. Females with lower educational attainment were more likely to have never had the test (13% of females with less than a high school education; 10% of high school graduates; 4% of females with some college; 3% of college graduates).

Injury Control

Safety Belt Use

In 1998, nearly 1/3 (32%) of adult Tennesseans reported that they did not always wear a safety belt. Males were more likely to report this than females (39% vs. 24%). Nineteen percent of all adult Tennesseans, 26% of males and 14% of females, reported that they sometimes, seldom, or never wore a safety belt in an automobile.

Risk Factors for Disease and Injury

Weight

Based on the Body Mass Index (BMI), 32% of adult Tennesseans sampled in the 1998 BRFSS were overweight. Nonwhites were more likely to be overweight (based on a higher BMI) than whites (39% vs. 31%). Nonwhite females were the race-gender group with the highest prevalence of being overweight (45%), while the lowest prevalence was found among white females (30%).

Among all Tennessee females, almost half (46%) of those 55 to 64 years of age were considered overweight. The age-group of Tennessee males with the highest prevalence of being overweight was 45 to 54 years (40%).

Physical Activity

In Tennessee, about 10% of adults had engaged in regular and vigorous physical activity⁸ in the past month. Thirty-six percent of adult Tennesseans reported spending no leisure time on physical activity in the past month. There was a statistically significant difference by gender, with 38% of females and 33% of males spending no leisure time on physical activity.

More than half (52%) of respondents aged 75 or older reported that they were physically inactive. Those with lower incomes and less education were also more likely to report being physically inactive. In households with incomes of \$75,000 or more per year, 14% of respondents reported physical inactivity, while 49% of those living in households with annual incomes of less than \$15,000 reported physical inactivity. By educational level, 17% of college graduates reported physical inactivity, while 58% of individuals with no high school degree reported physical inactivity.

⁸Regular and vigorous activity is defined as 20 or more minute sessions of exercise 3 or more times a week at 50% or more capacity.

Diet/Nutrition

The Food and Drug Administration recommends consuming five or more fruits and vegetables a day to reduce the risk of certain chronic diseases, including cancer and heart disease. In Tennessee, only 30% of adults are complying with this recommendation. Significantly more females than males (33% vs. 26%) and more whites than nonwhites (32% vs. 20%) consumed five or more fruits or vegetables a day in 1998.

In addition, as household income increased, the percentage of individuals reporting that they eat five or more fruits and vegetables per day increased. Those individuals in the highest income bracket (\$75,000 or more per year) reported eating more fruits and vegetables (41%) than those in the lowest income bracket (less than \$15,000, 25%).

Smoking

Current smokers were defined as persons reporting ever smoking 100 cigarettes and who smoked at the time of the survey, either every day or some days. Current smokers represented 26% of Tennessee adults. A significantly higher percentage of males were current smokers (30%) compared to females (22%). The race-gender group with the highest prevalence of current smokers was nonwhite males, at 41%, while nonwhite females had the lowest prevalence (19%).

Persons with lower incomes were more likely to be current smokers, at 35% for those with an annual household income of less than \$25,000. This is considerably higher than the 20% of those with an income of \$50,000 to \$74,999 who reported that they were current smokers. Even fewer (18%) of those with incomes of \$75,000 and over reported being current smokers.

Binge Drinking of Alcoholic Beverages

Binge drinking is defined as drinking five or more drinks on at least one occasion during the past month. The overall prevalence of binge drinking among Tennessee adults was 7%, with 10% of males and 3% of females reporting binge drinking.

Whites were more likely to binge drink than nonwhites (7% vs. 2%). At 12%, white males were more likely to binge drink than any other race-gender group; nonwhite females were the least likely to binge drink (1%).

Chronic Drinking of Alcoholic Beverages

Less than 2% of Tennessee adults reported chronic drinking (i.e., drinking 60 or more drinks during the past month). While no significant differences were found by race, males were more likely to report chronic drinking than females (2.1% vs. 0.4%).

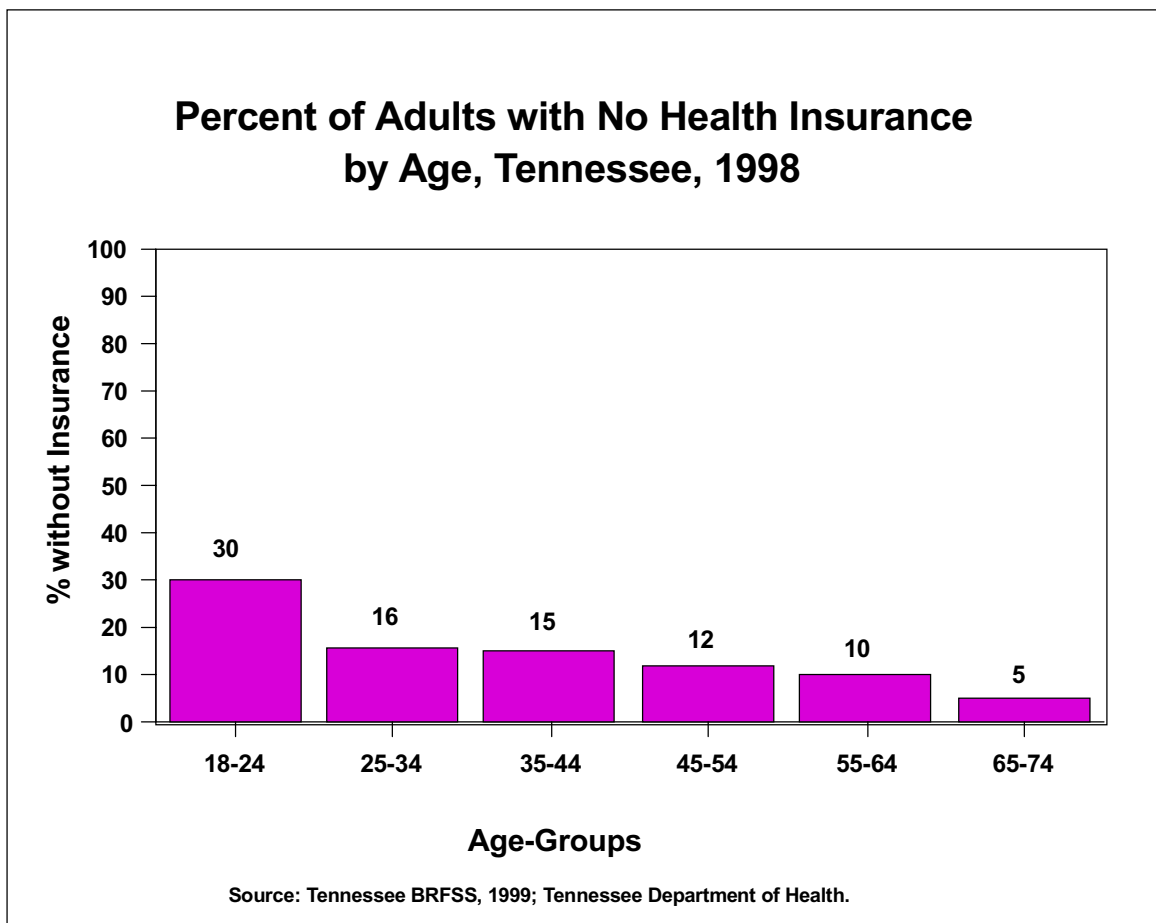
Drinking and Driving

About 1% of Tennessee's adult population reported driving after having too much to drink one or more times during the past month. There were no significant differences by race or gender.

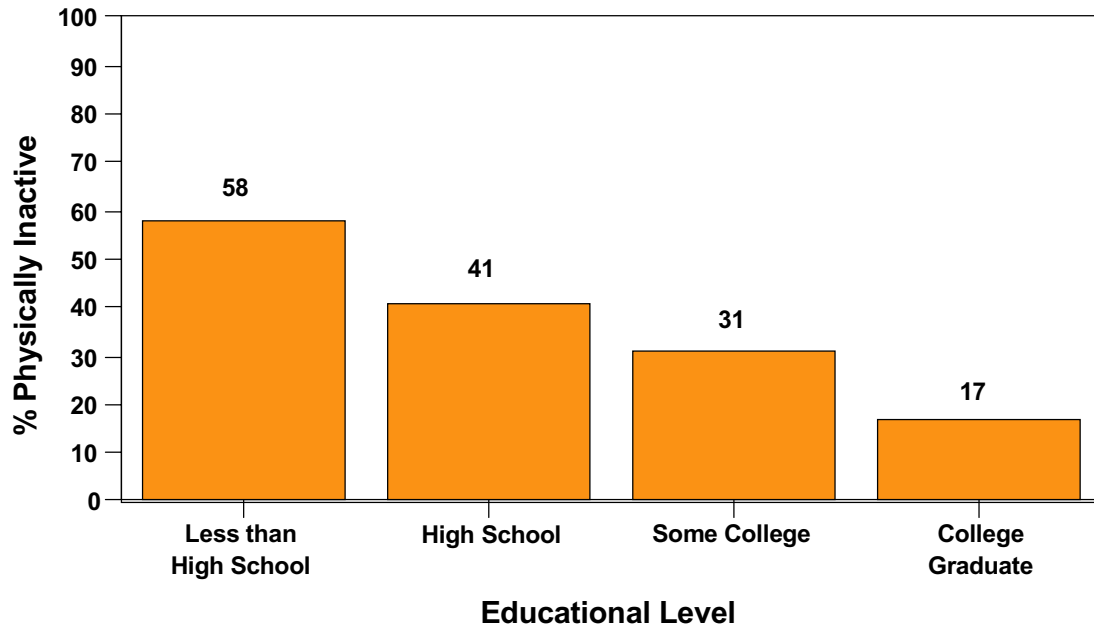
AIDS Risk

Among 18- to 64-year-old Tennesseans, about 7% perceived a medium-to-high risk of getting AIDS. While 8% of males perceived a medium-to-high risk of AIDS, 5% of females perceived the same risk. The difference was more pronounced among whites and nonwhites, with 10% of whites and 6% of nonwhites perceiving that level of risk of AIDS.

Source: *State Prevalence Report of Risk Factors for Tennessee, 1998*, and *Tennessee Statewide Survey Data, 1998 – Weighted*, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Tennessee Department of Health.

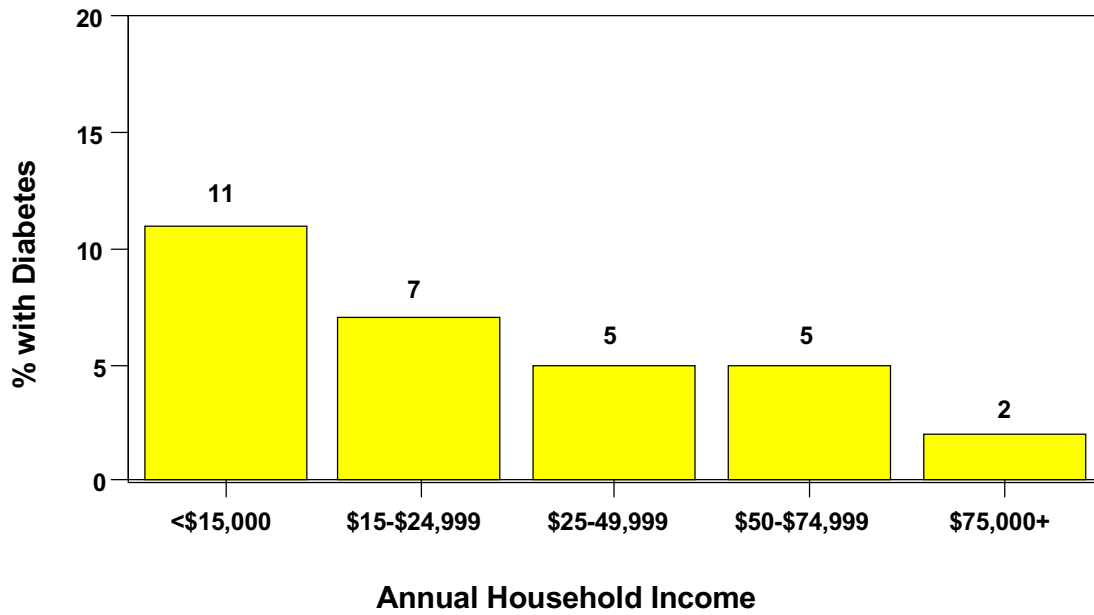


Percent of Adults Who Are Physically Inactive by Educational Level, Tennessee, 1998



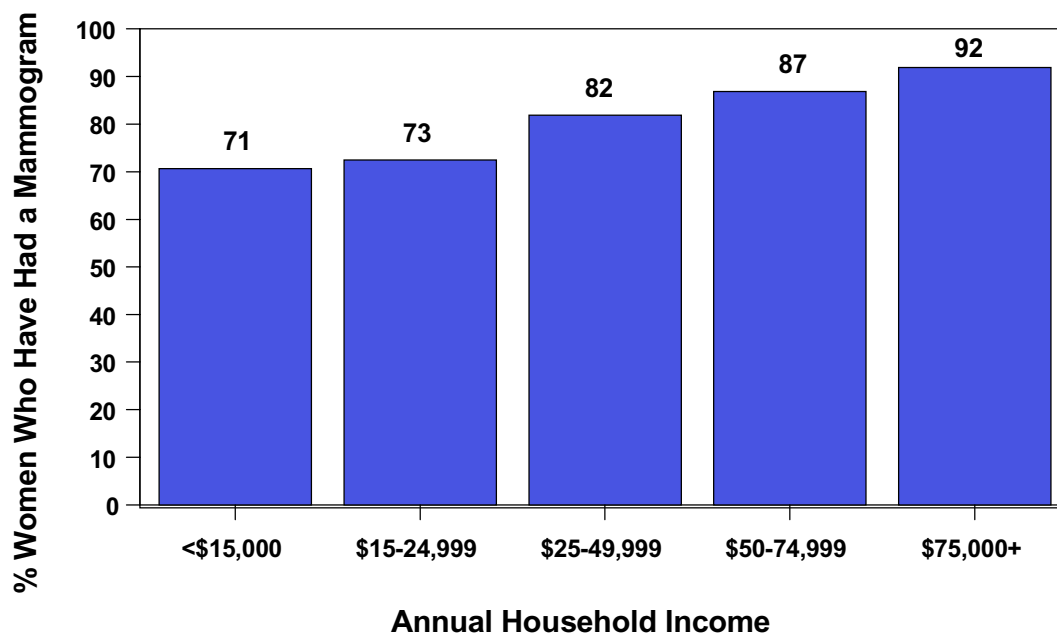
Source: Tennessee BRFSS, 1999; Tennessee Department of Health.

Percent of Adults with Diabetes by Income, Tennessee, 1998



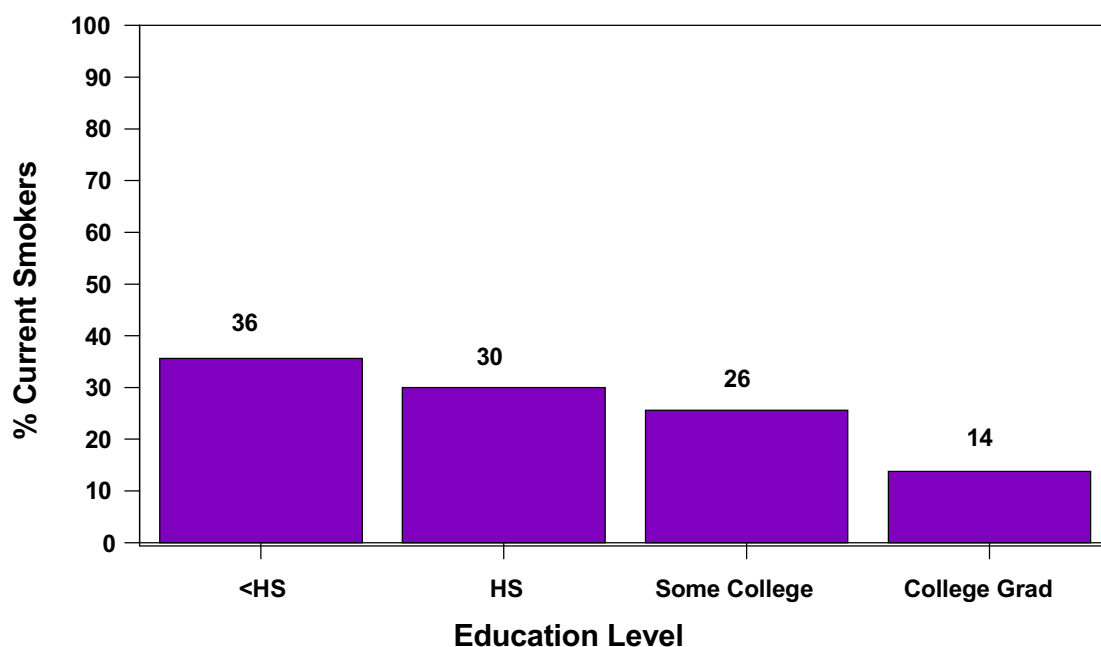
Source: Tennessee BRFSS, 1999; Tennessee Department of Health.

Percent of Women Who Have Had a Mammogram by Income, Tennessee, 1998



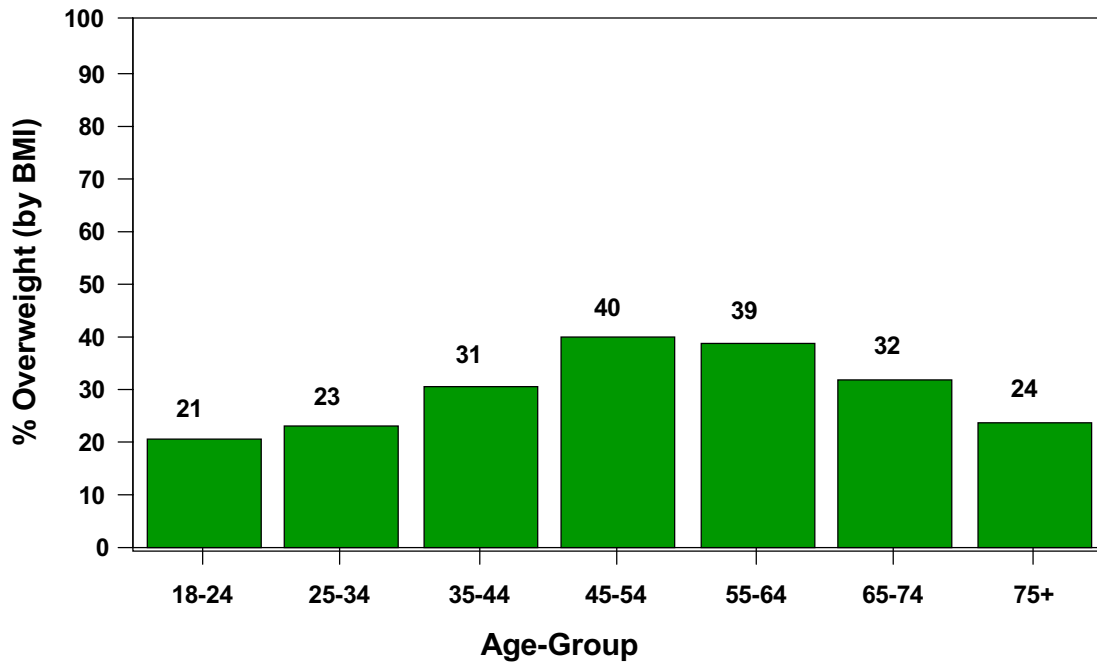
Source: Tennessee BRFSS, 1999; Tennessee Department of Health.

Percent of Adults Who Currently Smoke by Education Level, Tennessee, 1998



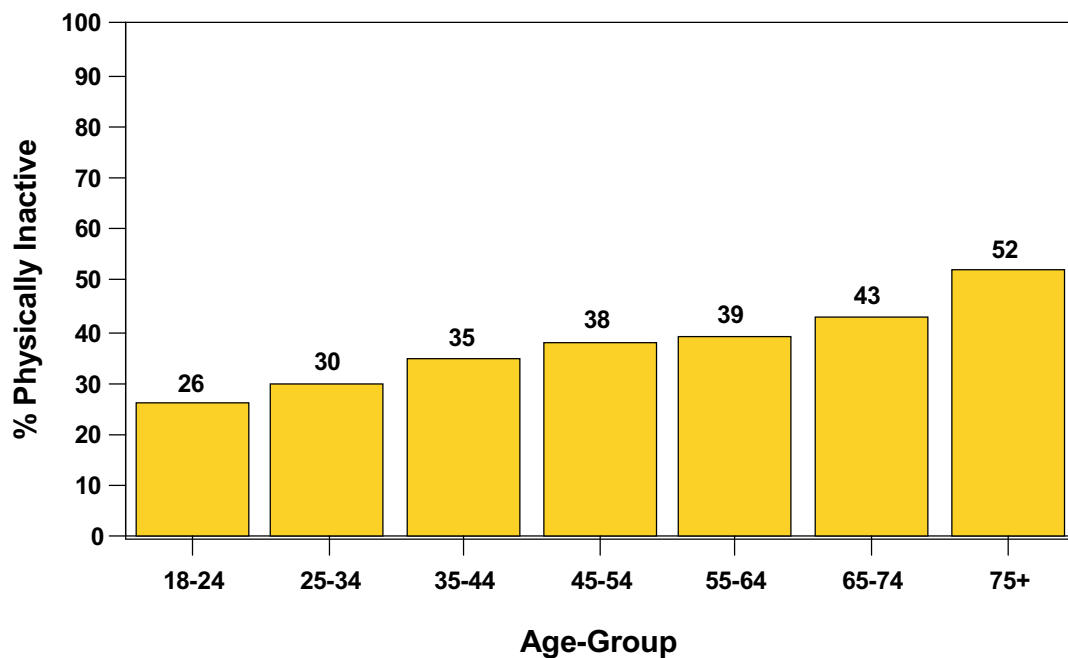
Source: Tennessee BRFSS, 1999; Tennessee Department of Health.

Percent of Adults Who Are Overweight by Age, Tennessee, 1998



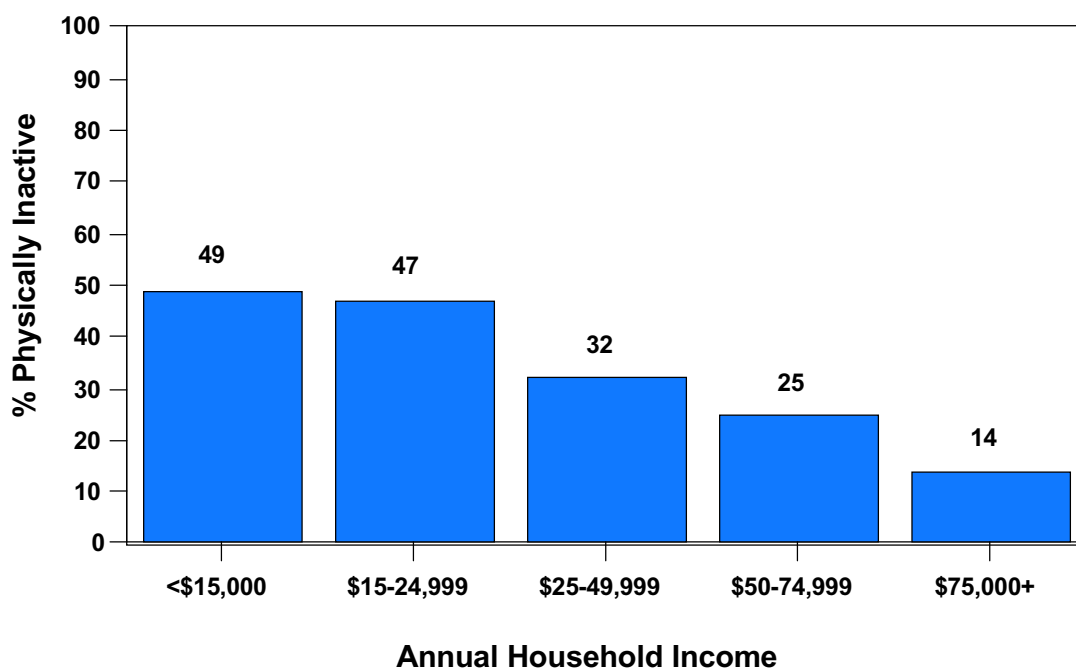
Source: Tennessee BRFSS, 1999; Tennessee Department of Health.

Percent of Adults Who Are Physically Inactive by Age, Tennessee, 1998



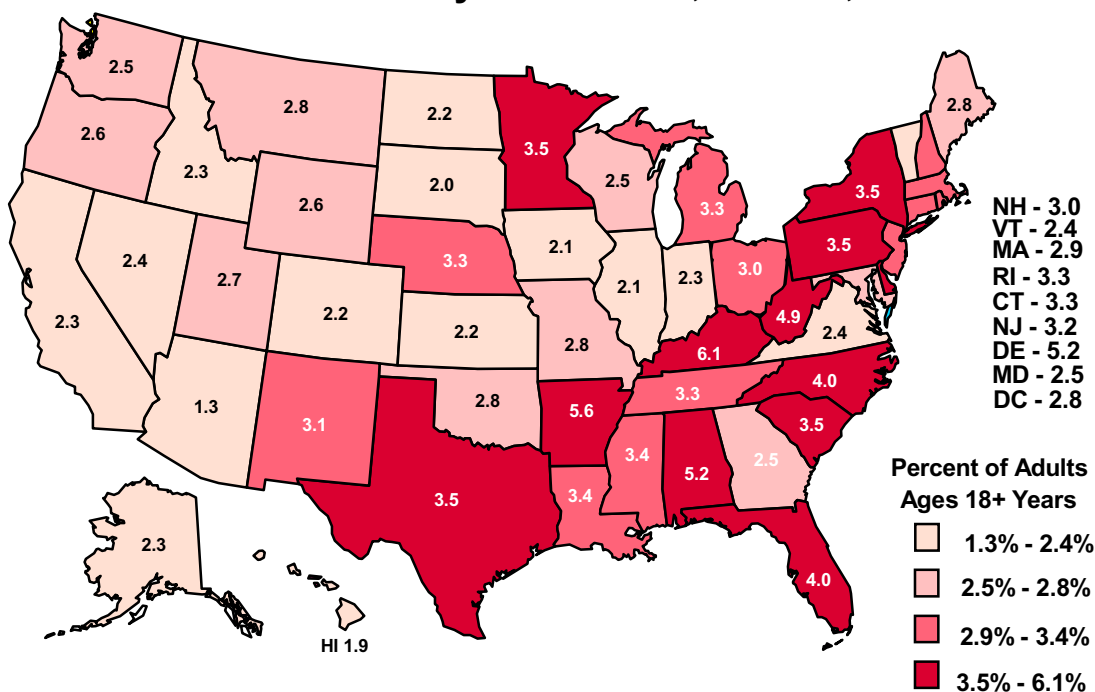
Source: Tennessee BRFSS, 1999; Tennessee Department of Health.

Percent of Adults Who Are Physically Inactive by Income, Tennessee, 1998



Source: Tennessee BRFSS, 1999; Tennessee Department of Health.

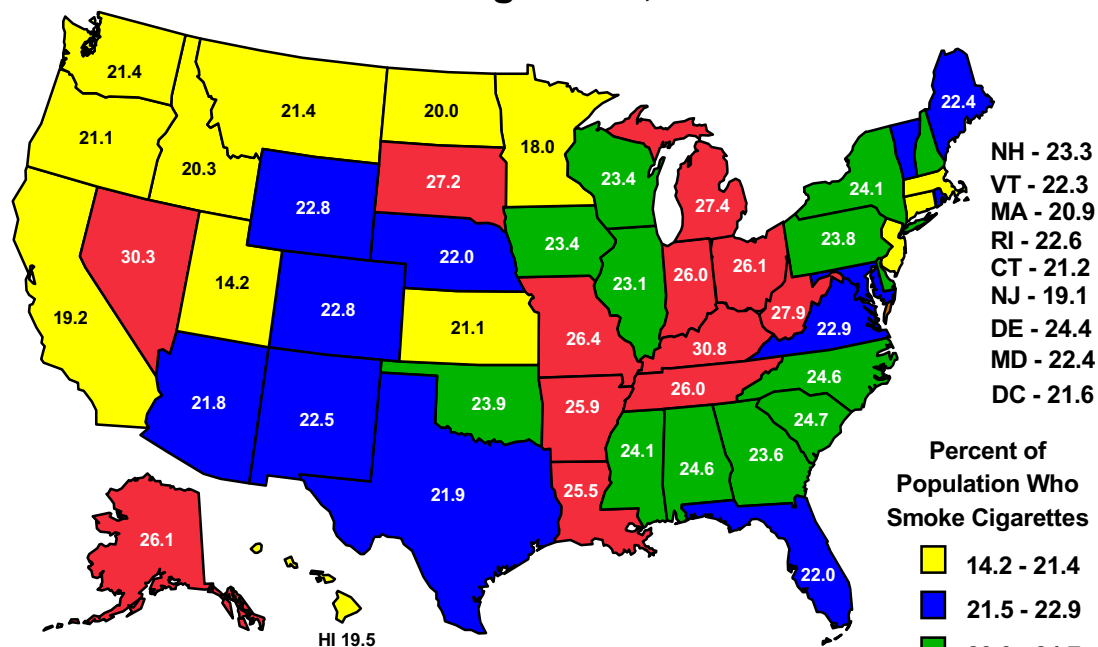
Adults Who Reported Limited Activity Because of Poor Mental or Physical Health, BRFSS, 1998



Tennessee - 3.3%; United States - 2.8%

Source: Tennessee State Health Profile, 2000, CDC.

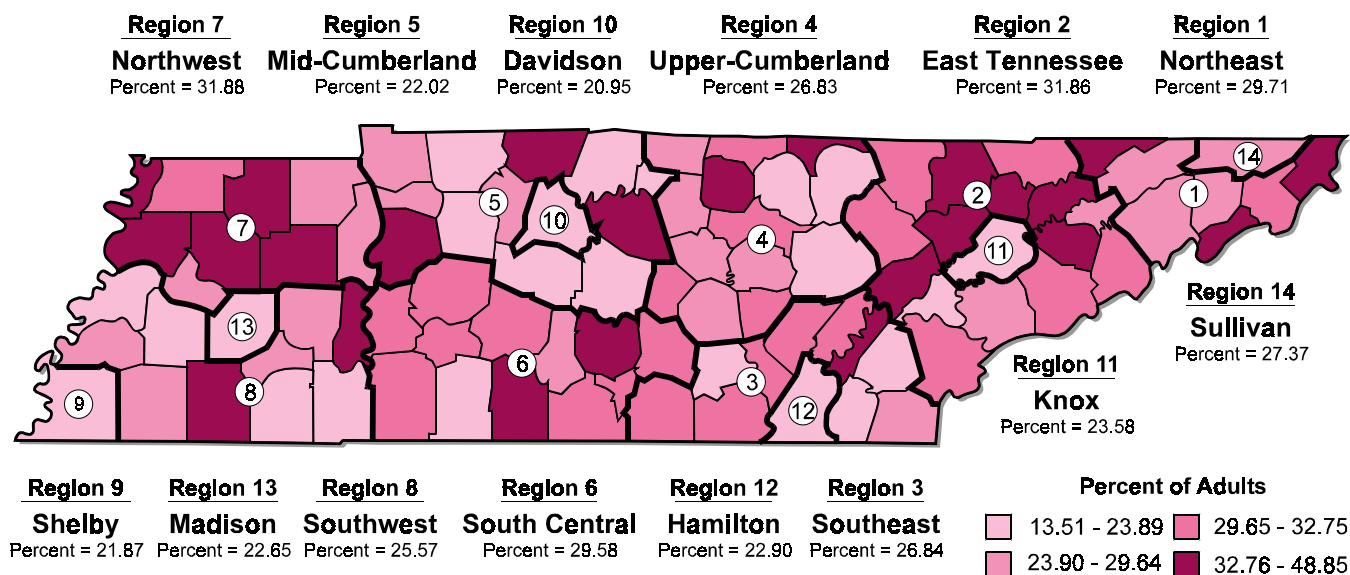
Percent of Population Who Smoke Cigarettes, 1998



Tennessee - 26.0; United States - 22.9

Source: Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Survey, 1998, CDC.

PERCENT OF ADULTS REPORTING CURRENT ADDICTION TO TOBACCO/NICOTINE BY COUNTY AND REGION, TENNESSEE, 1998



Source: Tennessee Adult Health and Lifestyles Survey, 1998; Community Health Research Group, UT; Bureau of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Services, TDH; and HIT/SPOT Web site (server.to/hlt)